

Coronavirus Information for Dental Hygienists

ADHA is sharing the following information to the dental hygiene community in light of the ongoing outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

According to the CDC, Coronavirus is a respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China with the ability to spread person-to-person. The risk to individuals is dependent on exposure. At this time, some people will have an increased risk of infection, for example healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients and other close contacts. For the general American public, who are unlikely to be exposed to this virus, the immediate health risk from COVID-19 is considered low.

Resources

The CDC has resources for health care professionals such as guidance for evaluating patients, infection control, preparedness checklists, supply of personal protective equipment and more. [Available here](#). The Healthcare Personnel Preparedness Checklist for COVID-19 is included at the end of this document. There is also general information available about the virus including symptoms and complications. [Available here](#).

Criteria to Guide Evaluation of Patients Under Investigation (PUI) for COVID-19

Patients in the United States who meet the following criteria should be evaluated as a PUI in association with the outbreak of COVID-19 in Wuhan City, China.

Clinical Features	&	Epidemiologic Risk
Fever ¹ or signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath)	and	Any person, including healthcare workers ² , who has had close contact ³ with a laboratory-confirmed ⁴ COVID-19 patient within 14 days of symptom onset.
Fever ¹ and signs/symptoms of lower respiratory illness (e.g., cough or shortness of breath) requiring hospitalization	and	A history of travel from affected geographic areas ⁵ (China, Iran, Italy, Japan, South Korea) within 14 days of symptom onset
Fever ¹ with severe acute lower respiratory illness (e.g., pneumonia, ARDS) requiring hospitalization and without alternative explanatory diagnosis (e.g., influenza) ⁶	and	No source of exposure has been identified

More information and footnotes available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/COVID-19/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>

The criteria are intended to serve as guidance for evaluation. Patients should be evaluated and discussed with public health departments on a case-by-case basis if their clinical presentation or exposure history is equivocal (e.g., uncertain travel or exposure).

Recommendations for Reporting, Testing, and Specimen Collection

Clinicians should **immediately** implement [recommended infection prevention and control practices](#) if a patient is suspected of having COVID-19. They should also notify infection control personnel at their healthcare facility and their state or local health department if a patient is classified as a PUI for COVID-19. State health departments that have identified a PUI or a laboratory-confirmed case should complete a [PUI and Case Report form](#) through the processes identified on CDC's Coronavirus Disease 2019 website.

Healthcare Personnel Preparedness Checklist for COVID-19

Front-line healthcare personnel in the United States should be prepared to evaluate patients for 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19). The following checklist highlights key steps for healthcare personnel in preparation for transport and arrival of patients potentially infected with COVID-19.

- Stay up to date on the latest information about signs and symptoms, diagnostic testing, and case definitions for COVID-19 disease (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/COVID-19/summary.html>).
- Review your infection prevention and control policies and CDC infection control recommendations for COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/COVID-19/infection-control.html>) for:
 - Assessment and triage of patients with acute respiratory symptoms
 - Patient placement
 - Implementation of Standard, Contact, and Airborne Precautions, including the use of eye protection
 - Visitor management and exclusion
 - Source control measures for patients (e.g., put facemask on suspect patients)
 - Requirements for performing aerosol generating procedures
- Be alert for patients who meet the persons under investigation (PUI) (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/COVID-19/hcp/clinical-criteria.html>) definition
- Know how to report a potential COVID-19 case or exposure to facility infection control leads and public health officials
- Know who, when, and how to seek evaluation by occupational health following an unprotected exposure (i.e., not wearing recommended PPE) to a suspected or confirmed coronavirus disease 2019 patient
- Remain at home, and notify occupational health services, if you are ill
- Know how to contact and receive information from your state or local public health agency

This information is also available online at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/COVID-19/hcp/hcp-personnel-checklist.html>